

Oller

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"He has a big smile and expresses a lot through his eyes," said Kevin Rearick, explaining how much his 17-year-old son Nathan loves racing. "Nobody has any doubts of him enjoying being a part of it. To a larger degree, it gives a feeling of doing something other people are doing, and that's the biggest thing for him in racing, or life in general."

Nathan, who has cerebral palsy and other motor-skill issues that prevent him from living on his own, showed a strong sense of accomplishment when his father got him out of his race chair with 100 yards to go in a 5K and walked with him to the finish.

"It was crazy, the emotions on both sides," Kevin said, adding that Nathan beamed as he soaked in the atmosphere.

But encouraging disabled competitors is not a one-way street of emotional support. As Vicki Potter put it, there is great comfort in being around other families who face similar challenges.

"As a parent of a child that's not typical, any time you can meet with and talk with other parents who have similar interests or issues going on with other kids, it keeps me ..." Potter said, her voice trailing off.

She didn't need to finish the sentence. It keeps her ... going. There is a saying that God won't give you more than you can handle. I'll leave theology to others and say only that parents with special needs children have handled a hundred times more than most of us. Remember that the next time you're tempted to boo-hoo over an Ohio State loss to Michigan.

There is another side of the Team Heart and Sole story that needs to be told, that of the special relationships happening between competitor and volunteer from outside the champion's family.

Randy Boring met Bryan Longenbaker soon after joining Team Heart and Sole through the outreach program established by his employer, The Crane Group Company.

Boring, 63, and the now 24-year-old Longenbaker, who has cerebral palsy, immediately hit it off.

"My running joke is we set a world's record for knock-knock jokes when we did the Nationwide half marathon in 2017," said Boring, who is director of community outreach for Team Heart and Sole.

Why do it? Why leave the comfort zone of "typical" to serve the "not typ-



Tommy Heilkema is flanked by his Team Heart and Sole teammates before starting the Ohio Health Capital City Half Marathon in Columbus on April 29.

BARBARA J. PERENIC/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

ical?"

"Just the feeling that I am giving back to the running community in general, and making a positive impact in people's lives, at least for one day every month or so," Boring said.

Heather Tucker says "yes!" to that. The 24-year-old intervention specialist tutor in the Hilliard school district sees the champion-teammate relationship from both sides. She has a mild form of cerebral palsy which allows her to live on her own, and being high functioning, she is able to compete in most Team Heart and Sole events without help from teammates.

"I was recently added to the (Team Heart and Sole) board, and we say the

champions are the heart and soul of the organization," Tucker said, "but without the teammates – the people who push the running chairs or walk alongside – these events would not be possible."

And, my goodness, how they absolutely need to remain possible.

Tucker put it perfectly: "If you're struggling with whatever, it's forgotten because the (race) environment is so enthusiastic and playful that you forget about any challenges. And it puts you in a mindset of being ready to go accomplish something fun and important to you."

Amen and amen.
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Primetime kickoff set for OSU-Michigan St.

Joey Kaufman

Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

Ohio State will host Michigan State in primetime next season.

The school announced Monday that the Buckeyes' game against the Spartans on Nov. 11 will kick off at 7:30 p.m.

It will mark the latest point in a season that they have held a night game at Ohio Stadium. All four of the Buckeyes' previous home November night games were played during the first weekend of the month.

The potential for inclement weather in the Midwest has often limited the number of night games scheduled for Big Ten teams over the final month of the regular season.

After staging its first night game in 1985, it wasn't until 2014 that Ohio State had one in November.

The last night game at the Horseshoe occurred in 2020 for the Buckeyes' 49-27 win over Rutgers. No fans were in attendance due to capacity restrictions that were in place amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

NBC is televising this year's game between Ohio State and Michigan State as one of the new network partners for the Big Ten, which reached an agreement with three networks, including CBS and FOX, last year.

The deal includes a "Big Ten Saturday Night" package on NBC and Peacock, the streaming service for the network.

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Bennett finished fourth in the 2022 Heisman Trophy vote behind Alabama quarterback Bryce Young, TCU quarterback Max Duggan and Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud.

In his only appearance against Ohio State, Bennett's Bulldogs beat the Buckeyes 42-41 in the 2022 College Football Playoff semifinal at the Peach Bowl, in which he recorded 398 passing yards, four touchdowns and one interception.

Over the course of his college career, Bennett posted 8,429 passing yards, 80 touchdowns and 21 interceptions.